



# NEWS RELEASE

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## ***USDA Rural Development Official Tours Southern Kansas Cotton Growers Cooperative Gin Fiscal Year 2006 Agency Funding Assists In Facility Expansion***

**Winfield, KS** – USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks joined officials from the Sumner-Cowley Electric Cooperative to tour the recent expansion of the Southern Kansas Cotton Growers Cooperative, Inc. gin located in rural Cowley County, Kansas. USDA Rural Development, in partnership with Sumner-Cowley Electric Cooperative, provided a \$558,000 loan to the Southern Kansas Cotton Growers Cooperative through the Agency's *Rural Economic Development Loan Program* earlier this year to finance the expansion.

In remarks following the tour, State Director Banks commented, "USDA Rural Development, in partnership with the Sumner-Cowley Electric Cooperative, is pleased to help support the area's farmers who are growing cotton. The expansion of the Cooperative's gin will allow producers to grow more cotton in this area, resulting in more profitability for their farming operations."

USDA financing through the *Rural Economic Development Loan Program* allowed the Southern Kansas Cotton Growers Cooperative to build a new seed house, purchase special transportation trucks and other related work. The gin's expansion will allow the Cooperative to gin an additional 15,000 acres on cotton annually. Southcentral Kansas farmers can usually receive a higher net return per acre growing cotton than other traditional crops.

Gene Latham, Manager of the Southern Kansas Cotton Growers Cooperative gin, remarked, "The USDA *Rural Economic Development Loan Program* is great. The USDA zero-interest loan allowed the Cooperative to expand its operations, resulting in even better service for our members."

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improving the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, the Agency provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. For additional information regarding USDA Rural Development programs, individuals may contact the Agency at 785-271-2700 or visit the Agency's Kansas website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks)

**USDA Rural Development – *Committed to the Future of Rural Communities.***

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